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THE PICTURE GALLERY OF THE HERMITAGE.—I.

BY CLAUDE PHILLIPS.

It is to Catherine II. that Russia owes the foundation of the picture-gallery, and, indeed, of the whole museum of the Hermitage; and, as regards the picture-gallery, not the foundation only, but the greater number of the magnificent possessions which are its boast. It is thus a collection much less recent than the National Gallery of England or the Berlin Gallery, which, since their foundation in the early years of the present century, have, side by side, sprung by leaps and bounds into the very first rank.

It must be borne in mind that the vast pictorial treasures of the Imperial House of Russia housed in the sumptuous neo-classic edifice which, adjacent to and connected with the Winter Palace, still bears the name of the Hermitage, are in the strictest sense the property of the Russian Crown, although they are exhibited to the public under the ordinary conditions of a national museum. They are thus on the footing of the collections at Windsor Castle and Hampton Court, which are, both of them, what may be styled heirlooms of the British Crown, though access to the latter is had almost as freely as to any of the national galleries. The great collections of the Imperial House of Austria, once housed in the Belvedere, but now in the all too gorgeous new museum near the new Hofburg of Vienna, are on the same footing as the galleries of the Hermitage; and the Crown of Saxony in like manner owns absolutely the more valuable section, if not actually the whole, of the famous Dresden Gallery. The right of possession is, however, in the last two cases, a merely nominal one, which the august owners would never dream of exercising. The famous gallery of the Prado at Madrid comes partly within the one cate-

gory, partly within the other, being made up of the *Real Museo de Pintura del Prado* (Royal Museum of the Prado) and the *Museo Nacional de la Trinidad* (National Museum of the Trinity). The Hermitage is, however, in a much closer sense an Imperial possession. Its magnificent halls have been used on rare occasions by the Czar for court functions, and its pictures are in the narrowest and most literal sense his own. It may happen that this or the other among the more portable canvases and panels of the collection disappears for the time being from the public section of the museum and finds its way either into the corridors of the Old Hermitage or, it may be, into the private apartments of the Czarina. The place of the missing work will then be temporarily taken by another picture not usually exhibited to the public. The Czar still reserves to himself, and not infrequently exercises, the power of lending his treasures to foreign exhibitions of importance, though his commands are, it must be owned, obeyed with considerable reluctance by the officials having charge of the Imperial treasures. Thus the Nassau exhibition, which took place last autumn at Amsterdam, was enriched with the exquisite "William II. of Nassau," by Van Dyck, from the St. Petersburg gallery, the "Venus and Cupid," of 1509, which is one of the first signed works of Lucas Cranach, the Elder, has gone to the Cranach exhibition at Dresden; and the Imperial owner has graciously consented to lend, from his peculiarly rich store, one or more examples of Van Dyck's art to the great display which constitutes, this autumn at Antwerp, one of the chief features of the celebration in honor of the tercentenary of the Flemish master's birth.

The private apartments of the Hermitage, and other various Imperial palaces in and about St. Petersburg—to say nothing in this connection of the palaces, not always well cared for, of the nobility—are still a veritable store-house of pictorial treasure, and one which as yet has been but imperfectly explored. The learned and enthusiastic director of that section of the Hermitage which comprises the pictures, drawings and engravings, Monsieur A. de Somof, has since he brought out, in a period extending from 1891 to 1897, in three sections, his admirable catalogue of the Italian and Spanish, the Netherlandish and German, the French and English pictures, made many a new discovery and re-identification. Thus, there have been brought into the galleries, since 1891, among many other things, an important work

of unusual dimensions by Garofalo, a "St. Sebastian" admirably illustrating the very latest period of Titian, and one of those curious kitchen-pieces which mark the beginnings of Velazquez. M. de Somof,* during a quite recent visit of the writer to St. Petersburg, disinterred at one of the Imperial palaces in the neighborhood of the capital a lost Rembrandt of the late time, "Christ and the Woman of Samaria," and found, in the depot of the Hermitage itself, a painting, "St. Paul on the Island of Malta," which, as regards its dimensions and its state of preservation, must count as the most important extant work of Adam Elsheimer. The writer himself, in the course of this same visit, during which he received invaluable assistance and every possible facility from M. de Somof, was enabled to make several new identifications, and to recognize, in one of the private corridors, masquerading under the name of Pater, an early Watteau of exquisite quality, "*Le Camp Volant*," to which reference will be made hereafter. The Hermitage owes most, next to Catherine II., to Nicholas I., who not only enriched the collections by many magnificent additions in various directions, but determined to provide an adequate building, planned specially to contain and display them. L. von Klenze, an architect then of great repute at Munich, was called in, and in 1849 completed, in a somewhat frigid, neo-classic style, harmonizing not too happily with the florid, exotic rococo, with the profuseness in moulding and adornment, of the Winter Palace itself, an important structure, the chief exterior feature of which is the central portico supported by a double row of gigantic nude Atlantes, their robust forms realized in polished grey granite. To this new palace of art were transferred, from the Old Hermitage and the Imperial palaces, the collections of pictures and works of art formed by Catherine II. and her successors. A committee, specially appointed for the occasion, made choice, in all the vast mass of paintings thus brought together, of those works which they esteemed worthy to be included in the revised and concentrated collection. Those which remained over were, some of them, divided among the Imperial palaces, while others were placed in the depot of the Hermitage, a certain number being actually sold by public auction in 1853.†

* See *Gazette des Beaux-Arts. Correspondance de Russie*, Mars, 1899.

† The surmise seems a legitimate one that the connoisseurship of the personages composing this commission cannot have been of the surest. Many inferior things and a certain number of avowed copies were retained with the marvels which give

The solemn inauguration of the Imperial museum took place on the 5th of February, 1853. From that date onwards, both the collections of pictures and the group of antiquities and works of art of the Hermitage have been uninterruptedly enriched by the important acquisitions made during the last years of the reign of Nicholas I., during that of his successor, Alexander II. and during that of Alexander III. More than eighteen hundred pictures are now exhibited in the public galleries and cabinets of the Hermitage. But there are many other rooms, to which the public is not at present admitted, containing pictures, very many of them of the French schools of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, among which are to be singled out a certain number by no means inferior to the publicly exhibited works. M. de Somof has appropriated, and will very shortly throw open to the public, an additional saloon, cut away from the private apartments, in which will be brought forward many French pictures once of great repute, but of late years rather forgotten, on the principle "out of sight, out of mind."

With the ground floor of the Hermitage we have on the present occasion no concern, though it contains, with a very mediocre collection of Greek, Græco-Roman, and Roman marbles, by far the most extensive and the finest collection of pure Greek and Græco-Scythian gold ornaments and vessels to be found in the world; the most astonishing and the best known piece coming within the latter category being the famous Nikopol vase, with *repoussé* figures, in high relief, of Scythians breaking in horses. On this ground floor are also to be found, besides a collection of Greek vases containing many examples, in the strictest sense, of the much-abused word, unique, the superb Basilewski collection of mediæval and Renaissance antiquities, a library, and a collection of prints and drawings.

In mounting the great marble staircase which leads to the first floor, and passing on in a natural eagerness to get as quickly as possible to the collection of pictures, let the visitor beware of making the mistake by which the writer narrowly missed seeing some of the masterpieces of French sculpture of the eighteenth century,

fame to the collection, while now and again one hears of fine works in the hands of private owners, which were originally among the Imperial possessions. Dr. A. Bredius, the learned and genial director of the Hague Gallery, told the writer that in a private collection near Kiev, in South Russia, he had seen a magnificent Titian of the mythological order, in perfect preservation, which had just such a *provenance* as this.

or, at any rate, original repetitions of them. These works are arranged in a great loggia or vestibule, which, extending through the whole length of the building, precedes and runs parallel with the picture galleries. The natural impression made on those who, hasty and preoccupied, traverse this vestibule too rapidly is that here is one among many vast and sumptuous halls, such as are to be found throughout the Continent, with their obligatory adornments of decorative sculpture. But no. New proof is here afforded of Catherine the Second's large and catholic taste, of her close connection with the contemporary *littérateurs* and artists of France. Houdon, the greatest portrait-sculptor of the eighteenth century—a master as to the quality of whose consummate art the fellow-countrymen of Washington and Franklin should need no reminder—is particularly well represented in this gallery of works brought together from many public buildings of the Russian capital. Here is a "D'Alembert" done by him in 1782, and here, too, an original repetition of the incomparable "Voltaire," now in the public foyer of the Théâtre Français. This example, which is, if anything, less alive, less intense in characterization, than the more familiar one in Paris, bears the inscription, carved in the pedestal, "*Ordonné par S. M. I., Impératrice de toutes les Russies, Fait par Houdon, 1781.*" The Paris statue is dated 1778; that is in the last years of Voltaire's life, that of the overwhelming apotheosis before death at the Comédie Française. Here, too, is a marble original of the celebrated bronze "Diane" of the Louvre, identical, save for the addition of a supporting sheaf of reeds—an expedient rendered necessary in the marble version, in order to provide support for the gliding figure in its audaciously momentary action. It is not a little diverting to recall that, in a century which we certainly do not connect with any excess of decency in such matters, this completely nude "Diane" was originally refused at the Salon on the ground of its portrait-like character, but also because it was contrary to immemorial usage, in the presentment of the divine huntress, to show her as undraped as Venus and her attendant Graces. To be noted are further, "*L'Amour*," by Falconet, and a bronze portrait of Marie-Antoinette, dated 1780, from the Lobanoff-Bostowski collection.

But the pictures recall us to our chief duty, and no further digression is possible, if even the faintest idea of the vast and comprehensive collection is to be given within our narrow limits.

The strongest point of the Hermitage is not the group of Italian pictures of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries; that is, if we measure it with the Flemish and Dutch schools so incomparably represented in the adjacent galleries. It will not, in this respect, bear comparison with the splendors of the Uffizi and the Pitti, the Louvre, the Prado of Madrid, the National Gallery, the Dresden and Berlin galleries. Yet, it is full of interest, and especially of puzzles, fascinating, not only to the specialist, but to all lovers of Italian art at its zenith. The puzzles are, moreover, worthy of all the pains that can be bestowed upon their solution, because they involve some of the main points which must be more definitely fixed before we can be sure that we know in every aspect the great protagonists who brought Italian painting to the apex of perfect achievement, where it remained for so short a space, before the descent began.

Works of the fourteenth century are practically non-existent at the Hermitage, and those of the fifteenth, even at its glorious termination, are few and far between. It is unnecessary to discuss here a much-injured diptych—or, perhaps, more correctly, two wings of a triptych—"Constantine Embracing Christianity," which are, on too slender grounds, ascribed to Andrea del Castagno.

The finest Quattrocento picture of the collection, and, indeed, one of the jewels of the Hermitage, is the "Adoration of the Magi," by Botticelli. It is a work of the middle time of the artist, and among the successive representations of the same subject to be found in his life-work—from its start to its finish—it resembles most the renowned "Adoration" of the Uffizi, with the portraits of the Medici family among the Wise Men and their following. Much less important in dimensions than this altarpiece, it is in quality even finer. The Florentine virility and haughty steadfastness which give a certain well-nigh unique character, among Botticellis, to the latter, are preserved in the St. Petersburg "Adoration." But it is as if the wand of an enchanter had touched the *dramatis personae*, loosening their limbs and thrilling them through with life and passion. The portrait-like character, the haughty virility, are preserved, but there is added in the later version the ardent impulse of onward movement, the concentration of living, pulsating human beings, towards the point of supreme interest, the Divine group,

which draws and holds them all in humblest worship. And, then again, the movement is not the feverish flutter, as ill-balanced as it is swift, which is among the most distinctive characteristics of the master; it is well-ordered, perfectly under control, and in the highest degree significant. The St. Petersburg example must date some few years after the Uffizi version of the "Wise Men's Offering," but, as the writer holds, before the great series of frescoes executed by Botticelli—in company with Domenico Ghirlandajo, Cosimo Rosselli, Piero di Cosimo, Luca Signorelli, Perugino, and Pinturicchio—in the Sistine Chapel of the Vatican.

Of the very highest interest is an elaborate triptych, "The Crucifixion with the Virgin, St. John, the Magdalen, and St. Jerome," which was acquired for the Imperial gallery in 1886, together with other important works from the Musée Galitzine at Moscow, as a Raphael, but is beyond reasonable doubt a fine Perugino of the master's early time, in which it comes somewhat later than the beautiful *tondo*, recalling Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, in the Louvre, and, as nearly as possible, at the same moment as the small "Virgin and Child" in tempera at the National Gallery. Certain figures in the "Crucifixion" are in design almost identical with that curious representation of the supreme tragedy, by Perugino, in the conventual establishment of La Calza, Florence—a work in respect of which the authorship of the great Umbrian was at one time doubted by reason of the strong affinity to the manner of Luca Signorelli, which is therein displayed. There is little or no excuse for preserving the name of the Urbinate in connection with this remarkable Perugino, seeing that two of the most exquisite early Raphaels extant are to be found in the same gallery, and indeed at a few yards distance. One of these is that jewel of the purest water, the "*Madonna Connestabile*," or "*Madonna del Libro*," acquired for the Czar Alexander, in 1870, at Perugia, from the family which gives its name to the panel, at the price—enormous in relation to its size—of 310,000 francs.* This little picture cannot have been painted later than 1502 or 1503; it belongs to the earlier half of the youthful Raphael's Peruginisque practice, but has, far beyond such nearly contemporary performances as the "Madonna Solly" of Berlin,

*The much smaller panel, "The Three Graces," now at Chantilly, which, with the "Vision of a Knight," of the National Gallery, belongs to Sanzio's pre-Peruginisque period, was acquired by the Duc d'Aumale from the Dudley collection, for the still larger sum of 600,000 francs.

the divine suavity of Sanzio, developed from the mystic calm of Perugino. In this particular, it is only equalled by the "*Madonna del Gran Duca*" of the Pitti, painted some four years later, when Raphael was definitively emerging from the shadow of his master. The drawing for this "*Madonna Connestabile*," by the German school of criticism given to Raphael, but by the great Milanese critic, Giovanni Morelli, to Perugino, is in the Print Room of the Berlin Museum. It is drawn on the back of a design by Perugino for a "Holy Family with Saints," copied and utilized by Raphael in his so-called "*Madonna del Duca di Terranuova*," in the Berlin Gallery. In the drawing, the Madonna holds not a book but a pomegranate. Curiously enough, when the St. Petersburg example was transferred from panel to canvas, there was found, between the wood and the painting, what appeared to be the original sketch of Raphael, agreeing not with the picture, but, in the particular just mentioned, with the Berlin drawing. It would thus constitute the intermediate stage between the one and the other. Not less renowned is the other early Raphael, the famous "St. George and the Dragon," painted about 1506, for Duke Guidobaldo, of Urbino, as a present for Henry VII. of England, from whom he had received the Order of the Garter. Count Baldassare Castiglione, whose fame is sustained less by his once renowned work, "*Il Cortegiano*," than by the wonderful portrait, now in the Louvre, which Raphael painted of him about ten years later on, was charged with the mission to the English King, and set out to accomplish it in July, 1506. The little panel found its way somehow from the royal collection into that of the Earl of Pembroke, for whom it was engraved in 1627 by Lucas Vorsterman. In 168, or thereabouts, Lord Pembroke ceded the panel to Charles I., in exchange for the famous collection of drawings by Holbein, now, after innumerable vicissitudes, restored to the royal collection, and—it need hardly be pointed out—to be found in the library at Windsor Castle. Even for the out-and-out worshipper of Raphael, it is hard to decide who, in such an exchange of masterpieces, got the best of the bargain. In the design of this "St. George," which it is interesting to contrast with the very slightly earlier and entirely different "St. George" of the Louvre, Raphael shows himself an Umbro-Florentine. He has been, evidently, inspired by the relief at the foot of the niche which, outside the church of Orsanmichele, once sheltered the world-famous "St.

George" of Donatello. This basso-relievo, which is from the same master-hand, is in these days better seen in an old *gesso* at the South Kensington Museum, than in the original marble, now defaced by the usure of the centuries.

A most romantic story attaches to the "*Madone de la Maison d'Albe*," that often-reproduced Raphael of the earlier Roman period, which is deemed to be one of the great glories of the Hermitage. It was at the end of the eighteenth century in the palace of the Duchess of Alba, at Madrid, where, besides the original, there existed a very good copy. The Duchess, in token of gratitude to her body-physician, for having successfully tended her in a grave malady, bequeathed to him both the priceless original by Raphael and the excellent copy. Her sudden death, in 1801, very soon after this testamentary disposition, made a most sinister sensation in Madrid. The doctor, universally accused of having poisoned his patroness, was sent for trial, but saved through the influence of the then all-powerful Emmanuel Godoy, Prince of Peace. To him the doctor, in recognition of his intervention, gave the copy of the Raphael, but the original he sold to the Danish Ambassador, Count Edmond de Bourke. It was finally, in 1836, acquired for the Hermitage at the great price of fourteen thousand pounds, sterling. A masterpiece of rhythmically perfect design—a harmony, almost a music, in this respect—the "*Madone de la Maison d'Albe*," undoubtedly is; yet the effort to attain to absolute perfection in this respect is too evident, and it is conveyed to the onlooker that the design is not quite naturally evolved from what would be the spontaneous action of the figures under such conditions as these. Moreover, the rather faded blue and red and crumpled white draperies make, on a first acquaintance with the picture, an effect the reverse of charming. "The Holy Family," known as the "*Madone avec St. Joseph imberbe*," is generally catalogued as a Raphael, yet it cannot, by the serious student of the master, be accepted as wholly or even principally his—whether we consider its design or its execution. It stands in this respect about on the same level as the Raphaelesque "Madonna and Child" in the Northbrook collection, and below such more celebrated pieces as the Madonna Nicolini, the Garvagh Raphael (*Madonna Aldobrandini*), of the National Gallery, and the "*Vierge au Diadème*," of the Louvre, in all of which the conception, if not the execution, is wholly Raphaelesque. The "Portrait of an Old

Man," ascribed to Sanzio is, in the opinion of the writer, the work of the Florentine Bacchiacca. The much discussed eight frescoes which, under the same magic name, came from the Villa Spada on the Palatine, and were acquired for the Hermitage from the Campana collection, need not long detain us. Waagen evoked in respect of them the names of Giulio Romano and Gianfrancesco Penni, but even these seem too big to fit the weakly pretty and purely decorative examples of Raphael's school, which, at the Hermitage, occupy a cabinet all to themselves. Five of the subjects are to be found again in the bath-room of Cardinal Bibbiena in the Vatican, the great classic decoration of which was mainly evolved from the designs of Sanzio.

But we must retrace our steps a little, and see what the galleries contain in illustration of the Florentine, Lombard, and Venetian schools in their earlier developments. Still under the name of Granacci hangs the very fine and important "Adoration of the Infant Christ by the Virgin and Saints," which Crowe and Cavalcaselle justly ascribe to Ridolfo Ghirlandajo, and identify with the picture which, according to Vasari, he painted for the monastery of Castello. This is in solidity and fineness of balance, greatly in advance of most of Ridolfo's works, revealing, as it does, a marked reminiscence of Domenico Ghirlandajo. It is less empty and superficial, more coherent, than such better known specimens of this facile and eclectic painter as the "Procession to Calvary" of the National Gallery, and the "Adoration of the Shepherds" of Buda-Pesth. In a *tondo*, "The Nativity," ascribed with a prudent vagueness to the Florentine school of the sixteenth century, and most unkindly hung, the writer believes that he has rightly recognized an early and particularly fine Albertinelli. It must precede, by some years in point of time, that very popular *tondo*, by the same master, the "Virgin and Child with an Angel," which, at the Pitti, is so uninterruptedly the prey of the perfunctory copyist. Here, in the types, as in the ardent, stimulating color-chord, the influence of Piero di Cosimo, Albertinelli's elder companion in the studio of Cosimo Rosselli, is very evident. The landscape is one of the most charming of a school in which landscape often lacks color and beauty. In the scantily represented Bolognese-Ferrarese school, we find a noble altar-piece, dated 1500, by Francesco Francia, in his best manner, but unfortunately not very well preserved. In a little "Deposition," with

numerous figures, ascribed to Ercole Grandi, hung high and disfigured with repaints, the writer believes that the Imperial Gallery possesses yet another Francesco Francia. The treatment of the central group is very similar to that in the magnificent lunette with the "Deposition," which is one of the most precious possessions of the National Gallery.

The Hermitage is particularly rich in paintings of that main branch of the Milanese school, which issued from the flank of Leonardo da Vinci. First, we have the famous "*Madonna Litta*," a composition of exquisite beauty, ascribed to the master himself, and which Leonardo's latest biographer, M. Eugene Müntz, seems still much inclined, notwithstanding modern research, to place to his account—an ascription on the part of the learned critic and archivist which would only be comprehensible on the supposition that he had not seen the picture itself. Notwithstanding the beauty of the conception—due, no doubt, in part to the mighty Florentine—notwithstanding the wonderful neatness and finish of the execution, it is evident that the author of the picture is a Milanese, and probably a Milanese of the elder, that is, the Foppa-Borgognone school, who has been superficially converted to that of Leonardo. The sharply contrasting reds and pale blues, the formal arrangement of the head-gear, the carefully banded hair—all these things are as foreign to the technique of Leonardo, at a period which would necessarily be well advanced in his career, as anything that could well be imagined. Crowe and Cavalcaselle put forward the name of Zenale, and alternatively the rather more acceptable one of Boltraffio; Giovanni Morelli, judging only from photographs, inclined to Bernardino di Conti, for whom, limited and clumsy as he now appears, the picture is, it can hardly be doubted, much too fine. A later critic has suggested, not more appropriately, Ambrogio de Predis. The important point must remain open for the present; but it may be laid down that there is no touch of Leonardo's brush on the picture, however much it may breathe forth his spirit.* Another puzzle is the delicious "*La Colombina*," so-called from the flowers which the fantastically dressed, or rather

*In the Stroganoff Palace in the Newski Prospect at St. Petersburg, is to be found under the name of Leonardo, a magnificent example of Boltraffio—a "Head of a Youthful Saint," of that ornate and androgynous beauty peculiar to this follower of Leonardo. It resembles, with important differences, the panels contributed by the Duke of Devonshire and the Earl of Elgin respectively, to the Milanese Exhibition, at the Burlington Fine Arts Club, London, but is vastly superior in beauty and preservation to these pictures.

undressed, Milanese beauty, idealized after the Leonardesque fashion, holds in her hand. Here is a work, manifestly by a less than first-rate artist, but which for all that deserves its reputation. If its fascination, even to the student, is indisputable, it is that some drawing by Leonardo himself has here been closely and most happily followed. The picture has until lately borne the manifestly inappropriate name of Bernardino Luini, whose suavity is more personal and less absolutely Leonardesque than this is. Morelli, again compelled to judge from photographs only, gave the "*Colombina*" to Gianpetrino. Had he seen it, he would at once have pronounced the flesh-tones and the general harmony utterly unlike those of that easily recognizable Milanese of Leonardo's immediate following. In the Hermitage the picture has now received, on the initiative of M. de Somof himself, the more appropriate designation of Francesco Melzi. The "*Colombina*" certainly bears a very close resemblance to the "*Vertumnus and Pomona*" of the Berlin Gallery, which on the authority of a now vanished inscription quoted by Mariette, is by the Berlin authorities taken from Leonardo, and given to his favorite Melzi. Very noticeable in this connection is the curious fact that the face of the "*Colombina*" is closely based on that of the Virgin in the so-called "Cartoon of St. Anne," an incomparable original by Leonardo, which gives fame to the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy in London. The whole figure of the "*Pomona*," too, suggests inspiration at the same source.

An undoubted original by Bernardino Luini, though it is marked by an asceticism in strong contrast with his usual feminine tenderness, is the life-size, full-length "*St. Sebastian*." The warrior-saint is here no beautiful ephebe, but a harsh-featured man arrived at full maturity. Luini betrays in this exceptional piece of his that characteristic timidity and lack of flexibility in the treatment of the nude which he never shook off. In his fullest accomplishment, and most perfect maturity, in his own mood of dreamy contemplation and pause from action, he is seen in the delightful "*St. Catherine with Angels*," which came from the Empress Josephine's Gallery at the Malmaison, where it was, it need hardly be said, called a Leonardo. Of this picture a repetition, or old copy, was recently seen in London at the exhibition of Milanese Art held at the Burlington Fine Arts Club. A "*Virgin and Child*" (No. 75, cat. 1891), is the hardly outlined repetition

from another and greatly inferior hand of the beautiful "*Madonna Pourtales*," now in the Wallace Collection at Hertford House, London. Yet another repetition is in the Czernin Gallery at Vienna, and a very inferior version in the ante-chamber to the Borromeo Gallery at Milan. None of these is for a moment comparable to the *Pourtales* version, as may be ascertained even from a comparison of photographic reproductions.

The earlier Venetians, with the exception of Cima da Conegliano, are conspicuous by their absence.* By that naïve and, up to a certain point, most attractive painter there is a very characteristic "Annunciation" (Galitzine collection), dated 1495. The Hermitage possesses that rarest of all pictorial treasures—save, perhaps, a real Leonardo da Vinci—a genuine Giorgione. This is the beautiful "Judith," which was in some incomprehensible fashion put down by Dr. Waagen to Moretto, and remained thus strangely catalogued for many years. It is possible, seeing only the photographic reproduction, to doubt. There is some hardness in the contour of the head, Giorgionesque as is its oval; there are passages of faulty drawing in the leg and foot exposed; the type of the hand is not that most usually found in authenticated works. But all these doubts vanish like sun-drawn mist in the presence of the work itself; the first glance carries with it conviction, swift and permanent. In no extant Giorgione is the golden glow so well preserved, in none does the mysterious glamor from which the world has never shaken itself free assert itself in more irresistible fashion. It must be remembered that this is a relatively early work, to be placed rather before than after the great "Madonna of Castelfranco." Though the conception is pre-eminently, in its voluptuous beauty, one of the *Cinquecento*, the execution here and there in its charming timidity still reveals the *Quattrocento* at its extreme limit. And then, Barbarelli's drawing, as we see it in the famous "Storm with the Soldier and the Gipsy," of the Giovanelli Palace,† and the later "Concert Champêtre of the Louvre" is in the nude far from impeccable. The coloring is not so much Giorgionesque as Giorgione's own—a widely different thing. The drapery, which recalls the fifteenth

*A "Virgin and Child," dubious^{ly} ascribed to Giovanni Bellini, is evidently an original by, or a copy after, the Cremonese Boccaccio Boccacino; it hangs so high that it would hardly be safe to pronounce more authoritatively on the point.

† Re-christened by Herr Frank Wickhoff of Vienna, "Adrastus and Hypsipyle."

century, in some of its sharp angles and breaks, is of that pale red, with yellowish high-lights, which is found again in early Titians. Wonderful touches, which the imitative Giorgionesque painter would not have thought of, are the girdle, a mauve-purple now, with a sharply emphasized golden fringe, and the sapphire-blue jewel in the brooch. Triumphs of execution, too, but not in the broad style of Venetian art in its fullest expansion, are the gleaming sword held in so dainty and feminine a fashion, and the flowers which enamel the ground at the feet of the Jewish heroine. This Judith, though she is no warrior-maid, capable of hewing off the head of the hapless Holofernes whom she has lured with her beauty, is still not merely a self-conscious Venetian beauty as which she has been represented. She gazes down at the head, upon which, in token of victory, she has placed her foot, with a tender and regretful interest, much as the Thracian girl in Gustave Moreau's well-known picture at the Luxembourg regards the severed head of Orpheus. What Moreau's latest critic, M. Ary Renan, aptly, if with a certain affectation, calls "*le principe de la belle inertie*," reigns here as in all Giorgione's genuine works. This is partly because he is still a Quattrocentist, and has not yet acquired perfect command over the whole range of dramatic action; partly, however, because the very nature of his personality causes him to transpose the dramatic mood into the lyrical, the outward drama into the drama of the soul.

The writer, before going to St. Petersburg, had,* arguing from photographs only, pointed out that a "Virgin and Child" (No. 93, catalogue of 1891), bore all the characteristics, not of an early Titian, as which it is catalogued, but of that much rarer thing, an early Giorgione. He must now make frank avowal that the picture is not fine enough in execution to rank as an original by Barbarelli; it appears to him, nevertheless, to reproduce, in a nearly contemporary copy, a lost work of that master closely related to the altar-pieces of Madrid and Castelfranco.

Sebastiano Luciani, whom, from the title of his office at the Papal Court, we know better as Sebastiano del Piombo, is magnificently represented at the Hermitage. The "Christ Bearing the Cross" repeats with even greater intensity, and on a considerably larger scale, the two chief figures only in the similar picture in the Prado Gallery of Madrid, of which there is a fine copy—ac-

* *Magazine of Art*, July, 1895.

cording to Giovanni Morelli, of Flemish origin—in the Dresden Gallery. The famous "Portrait of Cardinal Reginald Pole" is Raphaelsque enough in style to have been, both in the Crozat collection, and later on at the Hermitage, mistaken for a Raphael, as were, indeed, until quite recent times the greater number of the Veneto-Roman master's portraits, including the so-called "Fornarina" of the Tribuna, the "Dorothea" of Berlin, the "Carondelet" in the Duke of Grafton's collection, and the Sciarra "Violin Player," now belonging to Baron Alphonse de Rothschild of Paris. This is the more curious seeing that Pole received the Cardinal's hat from Paul III., so that the portrait belongs to a comparatively late period of Luciani's practice, and one during which his leanings in sacred art were entirely towards the Michelangelesque. An important "Descent from the Cross," bearing the signature, "*Sebastianus Venetus Faciebat*," is half Raphaelesque, half Michelangelesque. In a certain coldness, both of conception and execution, it is disquieting, and suggests that Luciani may here have been aided in some portions of the picture by one of these Raphaelesques who had grown up round the Urbinate at Rome.

The important canvases by Titian, which constitute one of the chief boasts of the Imperial collection, belong exclusively to the late, some of them, indeed, to the very latest, time. This is accounted for by the circumstance that, with the exception of the "Danaë" (Crozat collection), they were all purchased in 1850 from the Barbarigo collection at Venice, which comprised the contents of the Titian studio, sold after the master's death by the scapegrace Pomponio, who had survived his all but centenarian father and the industrious Orazio Vecellio, his brother, both of them swept away at once by the plague. The "Danaë" is a replica, with certain variations, of the late Titian of the same subject in the Prado Gallery at Madrid, which itself descends from the earlier "Danaë" of Naples, so much more dignified and academic, so much less passionate in its conception than its successor, painted to suit the tastes of Philip II. Another *variante*, not, however, from the brush of the master, is the very similar work in the Imperial Gallery of Vienna. The St. Petersburg picture is, on the whole, very inferior to the Madrid version, though in the head and some few other passages the finishing touches of Titian himself may, in the opinion of the writer, be detected. The

"Repentant Magdalen," dating from about 1561—the magnificent original of many repetitions and copies—is the most splendid show-piece of Vecellio's late time to be found at the Hermitage; but it is also much more than this. The "Magdalen" of the Pitti Palace, with her cascade of magnificent blond locks, is of the earth earthy, and a repentant sinner only in name. The St. Petersburg "Magdalen," not less superb in her full-blown loveliness, is less conscious of its effect, infinitely more sincere in her tearful appeal to heaven. We descend to earth, and find ourselves in close contrast with Titian's contemporary Venice, when we come to the not less celebrated "*Venus au Miroir*," the original again of repetitions even more numerous than those which exist of the Pitti and Hermitage pictures. Titian is here seen painting, under the transparent disguise of the love-goddess, some exuberantly lovely *cortegiana* of his beloved island city. His mood is undisguisedly sensuous, as befits a subject which must be painted *con amore*; yet, it is mitigated by a certain calmness and nobility not always, in the treatment of such dangerous themes, noticeable in his latest works. Even in the partial ruin of its chief figure the canvas exercises an extraordinary power of attraction. Merely a miserable and much injured copy of a Titian is the "Perseus and Andromeda," which stands, or stood, catalogued in his name at the Hermitage. A far finer version of the same picture, in which Titian certainly had a large part, exists in the Wallace Collection at Hertford House, where it has not hitherto been publicly shown with the rest of the gallery. The "Portrait of Pope Paul III. (Farnese)," also a Barbarigo picture, has generally, but quite erroneously, been put down as one of the numerous repetitions of a lost original by Titian. It is, on the contrary—like the great portrait-group at Naples, showing the Pope with Cardinal Farnese and Alessandro Farnese—an unfinished original, and one which differs, too, in essential respects, from the carefully finished portrait, also at Naples, which we must accept as finely reproducing another and more laboriously matured portrait by Titian. The suspicious, watchful look of the Farnese Pope is wonderfully given in the closely observed head, the rest being hastily filled in with a much broader and more careless brush. Latest of all in order of date—with the canvas next to be discussed—is an unfinished "*Ecce Homo*," with half-length figures, which, in its loose, impression-

istic handling, in its sombre splendors, its intensity of pathos, closely resembles the great "*Ecce Homo*," of Munich—itself a later and finer version of the celebrated picture in the Long Gallery of the Louvre. There was taken out of the depot of the Hermitage, two or three years ago, and is not yet to be found in the catalogue, an unfinished, full-length "*St. Sebastian*," which must undoubtedly be counted among the most powerful and expressive of Titian's latest performances. Half-wrapped in a tragic gloom, through which is divined, now, rather than seen, a forest country with one blood-red gleam on the horizon, the heroic Roman appears bound naked to the trunk of a tree—but after the ineffectual martyrdom and in absolute solitude. This is a far nobler and more moving conception than either of those versions of the Christian Apollo,—dating half a century further back in the master's immense career—the "*St. Sebastian*" of Brescia, a splendid athlete in a contorted attitude, and the figure in the *Madonna di San Niccolo* of the Vatican, which is that of a handsome, over-plump young Venetian of the people.*

To Paris Bordone, in whom are to be found united, on a lower plane of art, some of the characteristics of both Titian and Palma Vecchio, is here ascribed the sumptuous, and, at the same time, curiously naïve, "*Portrait of a Lady and Child*," once for no satisfactory or conceivable reason called "*Isabella d'Este*," though it in no particular resembles the authentic portraits of that illustrious patron of art and artists. This picture is greyer in the flesh, bigger in conception, at once broader and less solid in execution, than any authentic Bordone of the same type. It might, with much more probability, be ascribed to the great Friulan, Pordenone. The same fair-skinned, ample patrician—a North Italian but not a dame of Venice, as her huge turban proves—appears in the same splendid robe, and much the same attitude, but without her child, in a portrait owned by Mr. Ludwig Mond of London. One of the masterpieces of Venetian art is the "*Pieta*" of Paolo Veronese, which once belonged to the Church of San

*It is curious to note that Rubens must have known this unfinished "*St. Sebastian*" of the Hermitage. The early "*St. Sebastian*," No. 798H, in the Berlin Gallery, still mainly Italian in style, is but a splendidly vigorous translation into the Italo-Flemish of Titian's tragic conception. The picture is not a copy, like Rubens's avowed copies of the "*Adam and Eve*" and "*Jupiter and Europa*" of the Venetian. It is an appropriation and a transformation, which makes the theme Rubens's own, which gives to it a passionate truth less grand, but not less real, than that of the original.

Giovanni e Paolo at Venice, and was among the many treasures carried away from Italy by the agents of Charles I. of England. Hardly anything, even in Venice itself, gives so exalted an idea of this most splendid, most nobly decorative, of Italian masters as an exponent of sacred art. The Virgin, a massive and Michelangelesque figure, robed in blue-green and white, supports the pale, lifeless body of Christ, a cloth of a more positive blue being sparingly indicated rather than fully seen, near the body. Silver-white is the drapery on which the Christ lies, and pale purple the garment of the mourning angel who helps to support the precious burden. Not a note of more joyous, of franker color is allowed to disturb the solemn, yet rich and exquisitely subtle harmony. No painter of the later Renaissance can surpass Veronese in grandeur and intensity of sacred passion, when he chooses. If this statement should be deemed an exaggeration, let the admirers of the Veneto-Veronese master study a little more closely than they have yet done, the beautiful "Crucifixion" in the Louvre, the "St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata" in the Academy of Arts of Vienna, and the great "Martyrdom of St. Sebastian" in the church of that name at Venice, which is, as to its contents, the most glorious of monuments, raised by Veronese to himself.

Of the Italian art of the seventeenth century—that much, and on the whole justly, abused period, which deserves, nevertheless, more respectful treatment than is at present meted out to it—it is impossible to speak here in detail. With a mass of inferior stuff, bad even of its best kind, there are a few things which may rank as masterpieces of their peculiar and, just at present, *démodé* type. Those who, remembering Guido Reni's best work—at Rome and Bologna—should treat his art, rhetorical and self-conscious in passion as it is, with less than respect, would show themselves to be critics of the opportunist type. From the Walpole collection comes a first-rate example of the Bolognese *Caposcuola* in his later style, a "Dispute of the Fathers of the Church on the Immaculate Conception." More popular than this, by reason of a certain *intimité* and tenderness, is "St. Joseph Holding the Infant Christ," another example of the later time, which was originally in the gallery of William II. of the Netherlands. One of the finest and most convincing among the minor works of Domenichino is the "St. John the Evangelist," which

Nicholas I. acquired at a great price, and presented to his consort, Alexandra Feodorovna. A very similar picture is in the collection of the Earl of Carlisle at Castle Howard. Widely differing from these accomplished Bolognese stood out the Neapolitan Salvatore Rosa, who was above all himself, much as he owed, as regards technique, to his chief master, Ribera. Here we have a true poet-painter, one in whom passion and imagination pierced through the obstacles placed in the way by the time itself and by the fashionable schools which were its outcome. If his power of direct and forcible representation had equalled his power of original and romantic conception, we should have had here one of the greatest of seventeenth-century artists. Unquestionably, one of his masterpieces is the large "Prodigal Son" which came to the Hermitage from the Walpole collection. By no painter has this most moving and human of motives been presented with a larger and more synthetic simplicity, by none—not even by Rembrandt himself—with a more intense and heart-piercing pathos.

CLAUDE PHILLIPS.

(To be continued.)